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REVIEWS

Societal Evolution. By ALBERT GALLOWAY KELLER. New York: Macmillan, 1915. Pp. xi+338. \$1.50.

The belief that social science needs an evolutionary orientation similar to that given by Darwin to the natural sciences has led Professor Keller to write this book (p. 326). The terminology of the Darwinian theory of evolution has been retained and the chapters have been grouped under the headings "Variation," "Selection," "Transmission," and "Adaptation." A distinction is early made in the book between biological and social evolution. The former deals with change in the individual type and is limited largely by its heredity, while the method of social evolution applies to society as a whole and not to the individual as such. It, too, is rather rigidly controlled, in this case by the folkways and mores. Social variation is therefore within the folkways, and social selection is a process of selecting the best (or of eliminating the worst) folkways and mores as determined by the survival process. Rational (in the sense of foreseen) selection enters here only in the upper stages of civilization and as to quantity is always minor, but its quality is of the greatest significance for social progress. There is a conflict between biological and social selection which is evidenced by what Professor Keller calls counter-selection. This last, though biologically abnormal and potentially destructive of the type, is usually socially normal because it creates a social (and therefore an intelligent [?]) plane of selection and adaptation to take the place of the biological tests (p. 192). Social transmission is through the folkways (tradition), and social adaptation is the response of the folkways to the pressures of the physical and social environments. Professor Keller's theory that adaptations of the folkways and mores first occur in the maintenance (economic) mores, and later by induced adaptation of the non-economic mores, such as law and religion, constitutes an interesting, and, the reviewer believes, illuminating—though not altogether new—restatement of the theory of economic determinism.

The foregoing is an altogether too brief and inadequate analysis of the main contentions of one of the more interesting and stimulating recent contributions to objective social psychology. Its chief claim to

originality does not consist in the facts it presents, but rather in their alignment with a classification which, though simple and perhaps not particularly valuable in itself, permits of clear and forcible statement. That the author has accomplished his main intent of describing social evolution in a way analogous to (Professor Keller repudiates the idea of reasoning by analogy) the description of organic evolution by Darwin may in general be admitted, even if its major significance must be denied. If he had hoped to convince us that there is social evolution in this general sense his work is rather superfluous because of its lateness. A more fruitful task would have been to work out the concrete methods of social change, not in the general terminology of Darwin, but in a way comparable to the contributions of Weismann, DeVries, and Mendel to the methods of inheritance. While his contributions in the latter field are valuable, they do not appear to be either so fundamentally different in kind or so much more numerous (if as numerous) than those made by other social psychologists as to warrant him in the hope that he has set a new mode in social science.

It may be said by way of minor comment that more is made of the theory of recapitulation of race experience in individual development (p. 222) than many sociologists would agree to. In his lucid distinction between biological transmission through the germ-plasm and social transmission through the nervous system by way of the various senses (p. 212), he fails to mention a vast amount of technique of communication and objective symbolization which act as the correlatives of the senses in this social transmission function and which are more truly objectively social in their functioning than are the senses themselves. Many also would not agree with his restriction of religion to "unreasonable fear of the unknown" (p. 200), but his insistence upon the need for, and the difficulty of, finding a more rational and therefore progressive substitute for this type of control perhaps deserves more attention than it is likely to receive. Following Lippert, he also makes a valuable point (p. 228) regarding our increasingly abstract education, saying, "What makes the education of the modern child so hard is the distance and indirectness of attainment of recognizable satisfactions, and so the difficulty of correctly valuing the process; and likewise the absence of sanctions of an awe-inspiring order." In the reviewer's opinion his best contribution is in his concrete descriptions of social adaptation to typical anthropogeographic and economic environment—in themselves general contributions to the method of social change.

L. L. BERNARD

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI